

Application Serial No.: 09/988,522
Amendment After Final dated March 30, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated December 30, 2003

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 5, 6, and 8 are presently active in this case, Claim 5 having been amended by way of the present Amendment, and Claims 1-4 and 7 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goeddeke (U.S. Patent No. 6,351,948) in view of van Os (U.S. Patent No. 3,972,690) and optionally Kear et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,224,679). Claims 1-6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goeddeke in view of Kuypers et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,858,538) and optionally Kear et al. Claims 1-6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goeddeke in view of either Kepplinger et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,127,346), Kear et al. and further in view of Kuypers et al. Claims 5, 6, and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Goeddeke combinations and further in view of Alary et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,642,621). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejections.

Claim 7 was indicated as being “allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.” (Page 6, paragraph 6, of the Official Action dated December 30, 2003.) However, the Applicants note that Claim 7 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The allowable subject matter of Claim 7

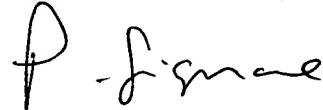
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has been incorporated into base Claim 5, and thus the Applicants submit that Claim 5 and dependent Claims 6 and 8 are in condition for allowance. The Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments set forth herein, since the amendments merely include the cancellation of rejected Claims 1-4 and the rewriting of the allowable subject matter of Claim 7 in base Claim 5. The amendments set forth herein do not raise any new issues that were not previously considered.

Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejections. Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Philippe J.C. Signore
Registration No. 43,922
Attorney of Record

Christopher D. Ward
Registration No. 41,367

Customer Number

22850

Tel. (703) 413-3000
Fax. (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 10/01)

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